

Nauryz Holiday

Nauryz is an ancient Turkic holiday which marks coming of a new year. The name of the holiday originated from Persian language “nau- new, ruz-year” and means “new day”. It is celebrated several days starting from 21st of March, the day of the spring equinox.

Nauryz is celebrated by all Turkic people- Kazakh, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Tadjik and many others. For all of them Nauryz is a symbol of goodness and wealth, happiness, friendship and love. People forgive all offences and make a wish to leave all badness in the past. They hasten to revive themselves both physically and spiritually, liquidate their debts, get rid of old things, repair clothes and their house, reconcile with neighbors, invite guests and present gifts to relatives.

The Nauryz holiday is a great festival when authorities organize public celebrations and erect traditional nomadic houses (felt yurts) with rich tables (dastarkhans) inside in the central squares of all cities and villages.

Traditionally young people gather around a large hanging swing with colorful decorations (altybakan), sing Kazakh songs and play national games, including “nine pebbles” (toguz kumalak), horse competitions like horse racing (baiga), and to name but a few.

During these days people from all over the world and every corner of the country have an opportunity to admire beautiful national performances and learn about the culture and lifestyle of nomads as they find people wearing beautiful national clothes, listen to Kazakh songs and play national musical instruments. Special exhibitions and fairs of traditional gifts and souvenirs are important parts of the celebrations.

The most important symbol of Nauryz holiday is a special prepared for this day traditional dish – nauryz kozhe. The recipe of nauryz kozhe may vary but it is obligatory to add seven ingredients symbolizing seven life beginnings such as joy, luck, wisdom, health, wealth, speed growth and protection from heaven. The ingredients are water, meat, salt, grease, flour, cereals (rise, corn, wheat) and milk.

During holiday nauryz kozhe is offered to all guests in any city or village of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Besides, other traditional Kazakh meals, such as beshbarmak, kuyrdak, boursak, and many types of meals made from milk (yoghurt, kurt, cream, butter, cheese, and so on) are also offered.

“Spring has been born” (“Koktem tudy”) Kazakh people say that day and celebrate Nauryz holiday.